

# Internships Attract Talented, Diverse Students

## This is not your father's internship program

Forget interns making copies and stuffing envelopes. Picture razor sharp students performing high-level tasks such as data analysis and environmental science research. The South Florida Water Management District's internship program attracts some of the best and brightest students from across the state – and the country – looking for meaningful assignments and real responsibility.

Each year, the Department of Human Resources facilitates about 15 internships for high school through graduate level students. These student interns are placed throughout the agency based on requests made by program or project managers District-wide.

Most are paid internships, though some involve student volunteers and/or high school or college credit. To be considered for an internship, students must have a 3.0 grade point average and submit three letters of recommendation from faculty members. At the end of their internship, the students receive a written performance appraisal from their managers.

"One of the major benefits of the program is that the interns learn who we are and what we do," said District Student Internship Coordinator Charmae Hillman. "They tend to become supporters of what the District does, and they understand the importance of our work. They each become community ambassadors to the District."

This summer, the District hosted 15 interns. Their fields of study ranged from environmental science, engineering and information technology to law, accounting and business.

*While most internships are offered in the summer, they are available throughout the year. For additional information, visit our web site at [www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov) and click on "Student's Corner" or call 1-800-432-2045, ext. 6360.*



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## Meet some of these talented young interns

### KATY WALTERS

Senior, Princeton University, New Jersey

**Major:** Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

**Worked at:** Big Cypress Basin

Katy Walters spent her summer as an intern at the District's Big Cypress Basin office. Among her responsibilities, she monitored water quality data to assess impacts of freshwater discharges on seagrass beds in the Cocohatchee River. The research project, performed at Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Naples, was conducted in compliance with a Florida Department of Environmental Protection permit for the Cocohatchee.

Katy discovered this internship while looking for a summer job, but never expected to find something that actually applied to her major. Her supervisor, District senior supervising engineer Ananta Nath, said Katy was a "tremendous help." Katy will be using the seagrass bed research project as a basis for her senior thesis at Princeton.

"I was surprised at all of the personal responsibility and freedom I was given," Katy said. "In a week and a half after starting my internship, I was out in the field helping out on all of the projects. I was treated as research staff."

### MARIE DESSOURCES

Senior, University of Central Florida, Orlando

**Major:** Biology

**Worked at:** Orlando Service Center

Among her many duties as a summer intern at the Orlando Service Center, Marie Dessources performed environmental evaluations of proposed development, wetland delineation, water quality sampling, permit review and compliance – and even participated in outreach events.

"We take a broad-brush approach and take advantage of cross-training opportunities to let our interns get a taste of who we are and what we do," said Marc Ady, senior supervising environment analyst. "We didn't want to pigeon hole her or anyone into one thing. She set the bar pretty high for future interns."

Marie's UCF ecology professor recommended the internship and encouraged her to apply. "I never thought I would take what I learned in my ecology classroom and actually use it when I went out into the wetlands during my internship," Marie said. "I thought I'd never even use this class!"

Born in Haiti and raised in Miami, Marie now calls Orlando home. She is fluent in Creole and assisted in a District outreach event for Orlando's Haitian community that highlighted the Kissimmee River Restoration Project. "It was great to go out and talk to the Haitian children," Marie said.

### DANNY ROSERO

Sophomore, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton

**Major:** Undecided

**Worked at:** District Headquarters, West Palm Beach

Danny Rosero got a taste of the high tech world of computers while working as a summer intern at District headquarters in West Palm Beach in the Information Technology Department.

Danny's supervisor, technical business analyst Dolores Cwalino, said that he "scrubbed" data (a quality assurance process to verify and analyze information) using a new program for a land acquisition database system. "He's very good with computers," Dolores said. "He successfully brought in GIS data and combined it with Oracle information. I wish I could have kept him longer!"

"I really enjoyed working here, and I was treated like one of the staff," Danny said. "What really surprised me about the District was learning about the amount of resources it has, such as planes, helicopters and airboats, and the diversity of people and jobs. There are lawyers and scientists – and interns."

### CHEQUITA BUTLER

Senior, Blanche Ely High School, Pompano Beach

**Worked at:** Broward Service Center

High-school senior Chequita Butler secured her second summer internship at the Broward Service Center through the Urban League – in cooperation with the South Florida Water Management District and the Broward County School District.

"This internship program is wonderful," said Peg McPherson, a senior intergovernmental outreach specialist and Chequita's supervisor. "It encourages minority students from inner-city schools to get out into the community to help us."

Chequita provided administrative support for special events and community outreach projects throughout Broward County. "Working with the Broward Service Center staff was so great," Chequita said. "I really learned a lot, and I got to see how hard everyone at the South Florida Water Management District works."

"Chequita is smarter than all of us," Peg said. "We'll be lucky to know her when she's in her 30s."